(c) No, Sir.

(d) Though the proposal was received from Gujarat Government in 2002 and 2004, the additional information and clarification required for considering the proposal was received from project proponent in February, 2006. Based on which clearance was accorded in April, 2006.

(e) Does not arise.

Fishermen captured by PMSA

2517. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL:
SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any possibility was explored to release around 432 fishermen of Gujarat State, captured by the Pakistan Marine Security Agency (PMSA); and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons for not returning the fishing boats?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government have been taking up the issue of the release of Indian fishermen and their boats regularly with the Government of Pakistan. Most recently, Government had raised the issue with Pakistan at the Home Secretary level talks on July 3-4, 2007 in New Delhi and the two sides had agreed to release on August 14-15, 2007, eligible prisoners and fishermen and to release boats except trawlers in each other's custody. However, Pakistan released only 100 Indian fishermen on 13 August, 2007. 296 Indian fishermen and 327 boats continue to be in Pakistani custody. We have conveyed to the Government of Pakistan our concern over non-release of all fishermen and boats.

Uranium from Australia

2518. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Australia has decided in-principle to export uranium to India, subject to India agreeing to very stringent safeguards and conditions;

(b) if so, the conditionalities Australia has putforth before India;

(c) whether Australia had also put a condition to ban all kinds of nuclear tests by India, a pre-condition for further talks; and .

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) (b) Yes. The Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. John Howard, telephoned Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh recently to convey the decision of the Australian Government regarding sale of uranium to India. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further at the official level.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Indians in jails of Nepal

2519. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in Nepal, more than 300 Indians are in their prisons, many of them being innocent as there is no evidence against them;

(b) if so, whether through our Embassy, Government would take up the matter with appropriate authorities in Nepal, to seek earlier trial of such accused, so that innocent Indian nationals do not continue to languish in Nepalese prisons; and

(c) the number of Indian women who are incarcerated in Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) As on 1.6.07.2007, there were 339 Indian nationals in various prisons in Nepal, arrested on charges related to violation of local laws. As and when any information is received about innocent Indians being imprisoned, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu maintains a close contact with concerned authorities in Nepal to expedite the trial.

(c) As on 16.07.2007, there were two Indian women imprisoned in Nepal.

Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal

2520. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the 123 Agreement of the India-US civilian nuclear deal has ignored vital interests and increased dependence on the US;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

(c) the financial viability of the entire Agreement and the total cost benefit; and

(d) whether Government are aware of the Left's objection *i.e.* Government to desist from proceeding with the negotiation for the 123 Agreement until the inimical provisions of the Hyde Act are cleared out of the way?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No. Prime Minister in his statement in the Parliament on 13 August, 2007 has made it clear that in concluding this agreement the Government have ensured that the autonomy of strategic programme is fully maintained and that the Agreement in no way curtails, inhibits or restricts our strategic autonomy or capabilities. Our rights to pursue our three-stage nuclear programme remain undiluted.

(c) As the Agreement is not a commercial contract, it is not possible to calculate its financial viability or total cost-benefit. However, the Agreement would certainly